

## Top 10 Cat, Dog Poisoning Claims of 2008 Revealed

**Raisins, grapes are most likely to make pets sick according to pet insurance company.**

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Seven grapes might be all it takes for cats and dogs to get sick from eating them, according to Veterinary Pet Insurance. The California-based pet insurance company recently reviewed the more than 400 claims from 2008 for toxic plant ingestions to find out which plants and plant products were most likely to get pets sick.

At the top of the list are raisins and grapes. Mushrooms were second and marijuana was third. In 2008, the average amount claimed for plant poisoning was \$427.

Top Plant Poisoning Claims of 2008: Raisins/Grapes Mushrooms Marijuana Lilies Walnuts Onion Sago palm Macadamia nuts Azalea Hydrangea

In addition to the top 10 plant poisonings, VPI received claims for ingestion of the following plants or plant products: delphinium, crocus bulbs, hemlock, rhododendrons, gladiolus, tea tree oil, poison ivy, nightshade, tobacco, poinsettia, oleander, brunfelsia, hibiscus, almonds, scarlet pimpernel, potpourri, and kalanchoe. Nearly all claims for lily ingestion were submitted for felines.

Dr. Carol McConnell, vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI, said most plant poisonings in pets can be avoided. "Prevention is a simple matter of keeping these hazards out of a pet's environment," she said.

When ingested in large portions, grapes can cause kidney damage in pets. Even in low doses, ingestion can place pets at risk for acute renal failure.

Symptoms include anorexia, lethargy, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.

The mushrooms most responsible for poisoning pets are the "backyard" variety. These often grow in grassy places, especially after a heavy rain, and contain toxic components that disrupt the functioning of the digestive tract and liver.

If ingested, mushrooms can cause salivation, dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, and liver failure. To prevent an accidental ingestion, pet owners are advised to regularly scan a yard or any other grassy area a pet may occupy, and pull wild mushrooms.

Fertilizer is another garden variety toxin often ingested by pets. The strong smell of fertilizer can motivate dogs to taste or eat it.

Some fertilizers contain organophosphate pesticides, which impair the nervous system. In 2008, VPI received 60 claims for organophosphate poisoning.

Pet owners can avoid accidents involving fertilizer by not using pesticide-containing fertilizers in an area frequented by pets. As with plant poisonings, prevention of fertilizer poisoning is primarily a matter of observation and awareness of a pet's environment.